

Lattimer Massacre

By EDWARD PINKOWSKI



About the Author

Like some of the Lattimer victims, the author's father was a Polish immigrant. His father, who had come from the Russian-dominated side of Poland some years before to escape persecution, got him a job as a slate picker in Midvalley, a mine patch of red-painted company houses near Mount Carmel. Soon afterwards he went inside the mines. He tried other work for a while in Massachusetts, where the author was born in 1916, but the call of the mine whistle was much more effective than paper mills and lumber yards. He returned to his old haunts and his wife and two children followed after him.

After graduating from Mount Carmel High School in 1936, Edward Pinkowski turned out a steady stream of essays, articles and book reviews. One of his first articles, which was published in a national magazine, dealt with the Slav people of the anthracite region, but it did not refer to the Lattimer Massacre. For all the author knew about the killing of immigrants in 1897 was slight.

When he got out of the Navy, Ed found more about it in old newspaper files. Upon further search, he found that no book had ever been written on it. It made his blood boil to know that people of his race were forgotten for shedding their blood for the cause of unionism. He dropped other work to unfold one of the worst deeds ever committed against the Slav people who came to this country.



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ON THE COVER

Where did the Lattimer Massacre occur? A towering tree, a remnant of the blood and dagger days, still stands on the spot, like a memorial to the historic event. About 400 strikers were massed on that public highway on September 10, 1897, when scores of deputy sheriffs, standing in front of the house shown in the background above the man's hat, opened fire. Andrew Meyer, who lost his right leg there, is pointing to the location of the streetcar route that once ran to the mine patch. One of the last survivors of the 1897 carnage, he lives at present in Beaver Meadows, six miles away, and was a guide for the author in the preparation of this story.

To The Memory
Of The Men Who Fought
To Preserve Their Rights

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Pow

~~Edward Pinkowski~~

HOW YOU SAY IT

Slavic names are hard to pronounce. The Polish language makes a point of stressing the next to the last syllable in a word, Slovak the first, and in Lithuanian the place of stress is unpredictable. The following are names which will be heard as long as Lattimer is remembered, with a phonetic respelling of each:

Broztowski	Brus-toff-skee
Cheslock	Ces-lak
Chrzszeski	Kri-zes-skee
Czaja	Ka-zai-a
Futa	Foot-tau
Grekos	Grick-us
Kulick	Koo-lick
Mieczkowski	Mitch-cow-skee
Monikaski	Money-kas-kee
Platek	Plot-teck
Rekewicz	Re-keff-itch
Skrep	Scripp
Tomashontas	Toma-shon-tus
Urich	Your-rick
Yurecek	Your-it-chick
Zagorski	Za-gore-skee
Ziominski	Za-min-skee
Ziemba	Zem-baa

The Lattimer Massacre

If you want to slow up business in Hazleton, a fair-sized city chiefly dependent on coal production in the southern end of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, just ask: "Who started the shooting at Lattimer in 1897?"

The miners in a saloon will lower their beer steins and look at one another. "The sheriff!" someone pipes up.

"Well, I don't know about that," the bartender cuts in. "He said he didn't give the order to fire upon the strikers from Harwood."

"The hell he didn't," the first speaker replies. "Didn't Sheriff Martin tell his deputies beforehand to fire when his life was in danger? He didn't have to give another order to fire."

Spend a few hours, a day, or a week, talking with people who remember the affair, and in the end you will have many different versions of the bloodshed that took place on a dusty road leading into Lattimer, a mine patch near the city, on September 10, 1897. What happened there isn't clear. There are conflicting stories. In the awfulness of that moment, nobody could point out the deputy who killed any of the eighteen victims.

Lattimer is without a parallel in the history of coal mine strikes in the anthracite region, yet it is less known than the great anthracite strike of 1902. It is labor's forgotten massacre. Never were so many strikers killed and wounded in Pennsylvania. The trial of the sheriff and his deputies attracted national attention.

Now that District 7, United Mine Workers of America, is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, there should be a great deal of interest in the Lattimer massacre and the miners who died for the cause of unionism. But so far nobody has marshalled an accurate list of the dead and wounded. The list of dead in the following pages is as accurate as can be compiled, but all the men who were wounded will never be known. Some were carried by their comrades into the mountains and their names were thus lost to posterity.

LATTIMER

The story of the shooting isn't as difficult to trace as it seems, but first it might be better to give a background against which to judge the massacre. Isolated from other mining patches, the framed houses of Lattimer lay on a plateau like two strings of blocks. The walls of the plateau, not far away on three sides, rise a few hundred feet higher. Here, in a dimple of the northern Alleghenies and a short distance east of U. S. Route 29, ancient glacial action turned large deposits of anthracite coal under the mountains. This particular coal was concentrated at the junction of Schuylkill, Carbon and Luzerne counties.

Its discovery in 1818 by a deer pawing the earth opened a new region for exploitation. Shortly afterwards Ario Pardee, an ambitious engineering student with the Delaware and Raritan canal interests, made his first trip to Beaver Meadows, in Carbon County, where he had been called to locate a railroad from the coal mines to the Lehigh Canal at Mauch Chunk. He ventured into the mountain fastnesses and decided that three miles farther up the Buck Mountain was a good site for a large town. But the railroad to the dreamland had to wait. For the gluttonous eyes of Ario Pardee had lighted upon another opportunity to gain fame. He saw and seized a chance to step out on his own by organizing a company to mine coal.

As business grew, he increased his holdings in and around Hazleton, the mountain plateau he had picked for a large town. In 1869, he built a group of squalid shacks, all alike and huddled side by side between two breakers, but in a line a few hundred feet in front of them, to house many who worked in one of his six mines. It was named Lattimer. It hardly compared with the marble hall of learning he put up for Lafayette College in Easton a few years earlier.

His college benefactors, as did several newspapers, called Lattimer a model town, but the miners who lived in the flimsy company houses didn't think so. They had no plumbing. No electricity. No paper on the walls. No paint except the number on the houses. The housewives had to get their water out of a pump in the backyard, and everybody gambled with pneumonia to use the outhouse in the wintertime. Worse of all, they had to deal in the company store, where food, clothes and mining supplies cost more than in independent stores. The miners called it the "pluck-me" store.

EARLY LABOR TROUBLES

These conditions prevailed practically throughout the coal fields, not only in the Lehigh region. During this period the miners found a natural-born leader in John Siney, an Irish immigrant who started to work in the mines of the Schuylkill region during the Civil War. They struck in the spring of 1869. Under Siney's leadership, the miners of the Schuylkill and Lehigh regions won a sliding scale which tied wages to the prices of anthracite at tidewater.

During the next few years Siney fought many other successful battles, and improved the working conditions of his followers. Wages were raised. Labor relations were improved. Toward the middle of the 1870's, the miners went on strike again, and the mine owners, taking advantage of hard times, forced them back to work. The miners' union disintegrated.

But the coal operators knew that the miners, predominately English, Welsh and Irish, would not stay down. They reasoned that they would eventually have trouble with their old hands if they were not replaced, and gradually brought in immigrants from other countries. They gave them work in the coal breakers, and as the newcomers found their way around they were sent into the mines, one by one, as laborers. Some paid mine bosses for jobs under the earth.

After his father's death in 1892, Calvin Pardee, then 51 years old, took over the mines at Lattimer and Harwood, two distant colonies about 10 miles apart, and kept in stride with the other mine owners. He demanded more and more coal at less cost. He filled the houses at Lattimer largely with Italian immigrants, and those in Harwood with Slovaks, Poles and Lithuanians. With a wholesale mixture of nationalities he felt that there would be less chance of a consolidation of the working men against his interests. The company stores thrived. Wages were steadily cut.

ORIGIN OF STRIKE

Lattimer in the late summer of 1897 basked peacefully remote among its hills, while several miles on the other side of Hazleton the miners were locked in combat. The strike first broke out at Honeybrook Colliery, near McAdoo, a newly created borough in Schuylkill County, when about 20 driver boys were compelled, by a new order, to stable their mules after stopping work without extra pay. They refused to heed the order, and Gomer Jones, division superintendent of the

Lehigh and Wilkes Barre Coal Company, discharged them. Then the company refused to deal with the miners' committee.

The strike of the twenty mule drivers was like touching a match to a fuse. Other men realized that they were doing a lot of work for small wages. They joined the strike and marched from colliery to colliery to stop mining operations. By the third of September the raiding expeditions closed down all the mines of the Lehigh and Wilkes Barre Coal Company. After that they marched upon other mines. One party marched to Harwood, a slightly larger patch than Lattimer, and forced the men and boys to quit.

To make matters worse, the mine owners kept reminding the county sheriff, a former mine foreman named James Martin, that their big breakers were in danger of destruction. But Sheriff Martin, a man who liked his good times, went off to play in the ocean surf at Atlantic City. Surging bands of desperate strikers continued down the byways, first to the south side, then to the north, spreading the strike with incredible speed.

SHERIFF MARTIN

Few persons knew much about James Martin. The son of an English miner, he was born near Pottsville, in Schuylkill County on August 26, 1851, and moved with his parents from one mining town to another. He began working as a slate picker in an Ashland breaker when he was nine, and went to driving mules when he moved to Plains, a mine patch outside Wilkes Barre, in 1867. He worked his way up the ladder until he became foreman of the Delaware colliery at nearby Mill Creek.

A Republican leader of the town, Martin was a tall and superbly built man—six feet three, 200-odd pounds. He had a classic profile. He was debonair and a good mixer with people. He commanded the respect of everybody in Plains because work was scarce and he had the power to hire and fire men at his mine. But none of these assets helped him after Matt Quay, one of the most corrupt political leaders in the State's history, supported him for sheriff of Luzerne County in 1895. His election brought the most unpleasant experience in his entire life.

He was lounging in a shore hotel when he received a dispatch from his chief deputy to return at once to Wilkes Barre. No sooner had he arrived than he heard of troubles in the lower end of the county. He telegraphed the sheriffs of Carbon and Schuylkill counties in which depredations had occurred to meet him in Hazleton that day, Monday, September 6. Immediately after the meeting, the three sheriffs published their proclamations in the local newspapers and posted them on posts and trees along the roads. The proclamation prohibited mob parades and demonstrations.



Sheriff James Martin

ARMING THE DEPUTIES

Since the 46-year-old sheriff was not very well acquainted in the Hazleton area, he asked Thomas Hall, chief of the coal and iron police for the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, to get the names of men whom he could deputize to act as sheriffs.

That night, in a room on Broad Street, Sheriff Martin swore in 87 deputies, the majority of whom were coal and iron police. The rest were fortune hunters who were now threatened by the stirrings of European immigration. Included in the list were some of the most prominent men in the city's social set. There were Robert Tinner, superintendent of the Bell Telephone exchange; Willard Young, a lumber merchant; A. M. Eby, former cashier of the Hazleton National Bank; Edward Turnbach, a powder merchant; Roger McShea, a school teacher; R. C. Warriner and Walter Douglass, two civil engineers; A. E. Hess, chief engineer, and Charles Houck, construction foreman of Lehigh Traction Company; Samuel B. Price, contractor and builder; John L. Salem, an agent for Grand Union Tea Company, and Ario Pardee Platt, chief bookkeeper of A. Pardee & Co. and manager of Pardee's department store.

Martin gave each deputy a rifle, a revolver and some ammunition. Some of the Winchester rifles were loaded with shells containing a lot of No. 8 shot, which scattered with deadly effect, and others had plain bullets of heavy bore. The Coxe Company, according to the **Hazleton Plain Speaker**, had ordered 500 rifles and 10,000 rounds of ammunition.

With a posse better armed than many an American soldier in World War II, Martin instructed these deputies in their new duties. "The sheriff said," a deputy later testified, "if his life or our own would seem in danger we were to use our own judgment in the matter of firing."

The strikers didn't know anything about those arms until the deputies stopped a handful of them at Cranberry. The deputies pushed them back with the muzzle of their guns. "You sons of bitches," one of the beaten men cried out. "You got us this time, but next time we'll get you with five thousand men."

HARWOOD MINERS

The day the strikers were chased home, a small, tense man with dark hair and dreamy eyes showed up in Harwood. His name was John Fahy. He had a bristling handlebar mustache, and it was as black as the coal taken out of the earth. He was a good union organizer, too, and because of his oratory and his great artistry with a gavel, he was much wooed by strike leaders. John Eagler, a 19-year-old Magyar who possessed a talent that made him greatly admired in the mine patches and who was a slate boss at the Harwood breaker, introduced the organizer to the Harwood miners.

Fahy asked the men to join a new union, the United Mine Workers of America, in the hard coal fields. He said the new organization stood for peaceful arbitrations of differences between miners and the mine owners. But the average miner did not understand how the union was supposed to organize and direct his struggle for better working and living conditions.

Most of the Harwood workers were Polish, Slovak and Lithuanian immigrants from Austria-Hungary, a nation of many Slavic elements, and the language which was most familiar to them filled the air. Their names and use of such palatal sounds as sh, ch, sz, j, zh and cyn were complicated to an American ear. Had not Fahy found fairly intelligent immigrants like Eagler and Andrew Sivar, a Slovak highly respected in the company patch, the chances are that the story of the Slav invasion of the anthracite industry would have

been a lot different. When Eagler and Sivar interpreted Fahy's message in their own way, the Poles, Slovaks and Lithuanians managed to achieve a measure of mutual understanding which could never be duplicated by an Englishman, a German, and an Italian.

Thus Fahy organized in Harwood one of the largest local branches in what is now known as District 7. It cost each man 25 cents to join the U.M.W.A. The members immediately elected Eagler to be the first local secretary and Joseph Mehalto, another well-known Slav from nearby Crystal Ridge, president. The Harwood body immediately formulated grievances and presented them to Pardee's office. They demanded a raise of ten cents in wages and a reduction of powder from \$2.75 to 1.50 per keg and no butcher store or doctor.

THE LONG MARCH

The only disturbing factor at Harwood was that the miners did not like things as they were. They were not working, and the Lattimer men, who worked for the same company, were. To make the operator consider their grievances, the single hope in the minds of the Harwood miners was to shut down the entire company.

On Thursday night, September 9, they met in the Harwood schoolhouse for the purpose of devising ways and means to deal with Lattimer. Upon the suggestion of Mehalto, the members decided to send a committee of ten to Lattimer the next day to have a talk with the miners there.

When the sun rose over Buck Mountain, the strikers gathered in the streets to wish their committee a lot of luck. The weather was so perfect that some of the breaker boys talked about going swimming. Some of the older boys had already gone over the mountains for farm products. Someone suggested that the men go along with the committee. It was their fight, and they should see it through.

The reaction was so sudden that Eagler held up the committee and went out to look for an American flag. He found not one but two flags. He lined up about 250 strikers in military formation shortly after noon and started from the patch on Pismire Ridge.

Breaker boys were lined up directly behind the first flag bearer, but their fathers did not want them to go. Their fathers were not mean but men of understanding who, perhaps a few minutes before, had held infants on their knees and

kissed their wives goodbye. They considered the distance to Lattimer too long for youngsters of eleven and twelve to march. But several breaker boys who were a few years older sneaked into the rear of the parade.

More recruits were picked up in Crystal Ridge and Cranberry, two other mine patches along the way. Four hundred strikers were in the parade by the time it reached Hazle mines. Some men at work in Cuyle's stripping saw them coming and fled. Little did they know that the strikers were on the way to Lattimer, a long march for anyone under a broiling sun.

FIRST SKIRMISH

As the 400 marchers approached the limits of West Hazleton, Sheriff Martin and several deputies popped out of a railroad car behind a culm bank and ran down to meet them. "You dare not go ahead," the sheriff gruffed. "This is against the law."

"Me no care, me go to Lattimer," shouted Steve Yusko, a Polish miner who continued walking along the road. Some deputies ran after him and grabbed him as though he were a wildcat. One of the deputies swung the butt end of his rifle down on Yusko's left arm and broke it.

The marchers stopped. Their leader, Eagler, wanted to obtain the deputy's name who broke the miner's arm in order to swear out a warrant for his arrest. But the sheriff took a piece of paper out of his pocket and slapped it in his hands. "This is my proclamation and you can't go any farther," he said. "It's against the law." He put the paper back in his pocket without reading it as he subsequently said he did.

Thereupon Edward Jones, West Hazleton's chief of police, remonstrated with Sheriff Martin. He said that he would not have acted as the deputies did and that the strikers have a right to go peacefully to Lattimer. He advised them, however, not to go through Hazleton but to take a round about route.

Some strikers used the pause to fill their pipes with tobacco. Holding his pipe in one hand, Anthony Kislavicz picked up a stone on which to strike a match. "Arrest that man," someone yelled. Two deputies grabbed him and led him away from the crowd and he and Yusko were lodged in jail without a hearing.

Other deputies were still uneasy. One of them, Ario Pardee Platt, who flaunted the fact that his great grandfather fought through the American Revolution and his father's uncle,

Ario Pardee, equipped two companies for combat in the Civil War, could not stand to see Mehalto holding the Stars and Stripes over his head. He yanked the flag out of Mehalto's grasp and tore it to pieces. "I tackled a striker at West Hazleton," he testified afterwards, "because he had struck me with the flag staff."

ON TO LATTIMER

As Jones showed the marchers the way to go through West Hazleton, Sheriff Martin and his deputies boarded a trolley and hastened back into Hazleton and out the Lattimer line as far as Harleigh, a cluster of company houses halfway between Hazleton and Lattimer. Here the posse left the trolley and took a position slightly above the mine patches to watch for the strikers.

It didn't take much to recognize the marchers from a distance. Fifty and more years ago the miners dressed as they did in the old country. They wore slouch hats in Alpine fashion with the crown raised, and some had black straw hats. They wore stovepipe pants, dark clothes, and under their coats a variety of galluses. They sprouted the best handlebar mustaches in the business. The deputies, on the other hand, were dressed in street clothes and plug hats.

The paraders stopped when they saw the sheriff and deputies perched on the hill in front of Farley's Hotel. They gathered around Eagler to determine whether to approach No. 1 or No. 3 breaker. After deciding on No. 1 breaker they resumed the march up the hill. The sheriff and his band hopped on the car and traveled alongside the marchers as far as the fork in the road. When the strikers turned right on the Lattimer road, the sheriff ordered the car motorman to go ahead. When the special car of the Lehigh Traction Company reached the first house in Lattimer, the sheriff said, "Here will do."

The sheriff and his Slav-haters jumped off the car and three companies formed a horseshoe across the public highway in front of the first house. The colliery whistle rallied more deputies who were stationed at No. 1 and No. 3 breakers. The road curved from the trolley bank on the ridge of the hill and cut the space between the first house and the trolley tracks practically in half.

STRIKERS UNDER FIRE

Shortly after three o'clock on the afternoon of the fatal September 10, the marching men appeared over the knob and

followed the bend in the road. "The strikers are coming," spread through the cluster of unpainted shacks. Sheriff Martin, still clutching the proclamation, walked forward to meet the oncoming men. The American flag waved in the sunshine.

"Halt!" the sheriff commanded. "Where are you going?"

"We go to Lattimer mines," several voices replied.

"Stop," barked the sheriff, "you are disobeying the law. Go back."

"Go on," someone shouted, "Go on."

"Who said, 'go on'?" snapped the sheriff, grabbing the man nearest him by the coat collar. He lowered his right hand and drew his revolver, which, he insisted later, would not go off because of sweat on it. Anthony Novatny, who said he was an American citizen, pushed through the ranks to explain to the county official from Plains.

"We are not disobeying the law," he said. "We have no clubs; we are not going to kill or murder. We want to go on through the town, as is the privilege accorded any man, and not to interfere with anybody."

Suddenly there was pressure from the rear ranks and the sheriff pulled the striker to the side of the road. As he dropped to his knees, a Winchester rifle popped, then another, and finally a volley like a pack of firecrackers.

The strikers scattered to the right and left like a flock of partridges. Several started toward the school house. One of them fell beneath the enflaming fire. Those in front dropped like wheat stalks before a scythe. Steve Ulrich, a Slovak immigrant who was carrying the American flag, fell into the ditch near a sewer pipe that ran beneath the street railway. "My God," he cried in Slavonian, "that is enough." He was, according to eye-witnesses, the first man killed.

Martin's sharpshooters were prepared to kill. One type of bullets they used in their rifles passed through the flesh and often caused death from hemorrhage. Another type shattered the tissues. Most of the victims were shot in the back and the bullets went right through their bodies. Miners trying to reach the thin rows of trees on the other side of the trolley bank were shot by deputies who came out of their ranks and followed the strikers about thirty yards.

Men froze momentarily as their comrades fell about them. Three bodies, face downward, lay along the trolley bank, and three others a short distance away. The blood of the dead and dying soaked the dusty road and stained the water which

flowed past Ulrich's body. Two derby hats lying on the ground were splattered with blood. The deputies held their guns horizontally after the shooting, ready if necessary, to fire again.

THE LATTIMER MARTYRS

The Lattimer massacre resulted in the death of eighteen marchers and the wounding of twice that many. The dead:

Sebastian Broztowski, 40, Polish.
Michael Cheslock, 38, Slovak.
Frank Chrzesczeski, 18, Polish.
Adalbert Czaja, 21, Polish.
John Futa, 17, Slovak.
Anthony Grekos, Lithuanian.
George Kulick, Polish.
Andrew Mieczkowski, 33, Polish.
Andrew Monikaski, Slovak.
Clement Platek, 33, Polish.
Rafael Bekewicz, 25, Polish.
John Skrep, 25, Polish.
Jacob Tomashontas, 18, Lithuanian.
Steve Ulrich, Slovak.
Andrew Yurecek, 40, Slovak.
Stanley Zagorski, 38, Polish.
Adam Ziominski, 18, Polish.
Adalbert Ziembra, 25, Polish.

Eleven of these martyrs were Polish, five Slovak, and two Lithuanian, but the majority of them were born in Galicia, sometimes called Small Poland, and spoke the Slavonian language. When Platek was shot, for instance, he grasped his side and moaned "O, Ya! O, Ya! O, Ya!" This foreign expression, which means "O, Jesus," is common among Slavonians when they are in pain or deep sorrow.

The ages of four victims were not given in records found by the author, but it is safe to assume that they were in the bracket from 17 to 40. Two of them, Grekos and Ulrich, were married as were at least seven others. Nobody knows how many orphans were left by the Lattimer victims, but I counted 20 from various newspaper reports. Nine of the martyrs came from Harwood, six from Cranberry, two from Crystal Ridge, and one from Humboldt.

Most newspaper reports of the shooting said 24 miners were killed. This is not so. Six men who were likely to die were listed among the dead. Those were:

John Bonko, 30, Polish, Cranberry.
Casper Dulass, 33, Lithuanian, Hazleton.
George Gasperick, 32, Slovak, Harwood.
John Kuliek, 36, Polish, Harwood.
Andrew Slabonick, 32, Slovak, Harwood.
John Slabonick, 36, Slovak, Harwood.

Never in the history of the hard coal fields were so many men killed during a strike. None of them was armed. They destroyed no private property. The Lattimer massacre is among the blackest events in American labor history. Two others took a larger toll of lives. The shooting of six miners and burning of two women and eleven children in a tent colony at Ludlow, Colorado, on April 20, 1914, was the outcome of a strike for recognition of the United Mine Workers of America. Twenty-three strikebreakers and a miner were killed at Herrin, Illinois, in June, 1922.

BLOOD AND TEARS

After the bloody fusillade, the miners ceased running to look after their wounded. The wagons and horses which served as mine ambulances were pressed into service and extra trolley cars sped to Lattimer to bring out the dead and wounded. The two-room school house, close to the scene of carnage, was turned into a temporary hospital. Two school teachers cared for wounded miners until several doctors arrived. Charles Guscott, teacher of the older children, pulled a bullet out of a man's body.

A Polish miner, who ran as far as he could, stopped Eagler near the school house. "Butty," he moaned, "loosen me suspenders and collar, they hurt me much." The strike leader loosened the collar and suspenders and pulled down his shirt. There was a hole in the back of his neck as big as a coin and blood was pouring out of it. He took a handkerchief that was handed him and bandaged the wound.

The deputies met with little defiance until they wandered off the battlefield. Two miners, John Slabonick and John Bonko, who were shot in the head, were carried by their comrades as far as Farley's Hotel, in Harleigh, to seek relief. A bystander said it was a shame what the deputies did to them.

"Shut up or you will get the same dose," said Hess, who was captain of Company A.

"You low down cowardly cur," the bystander replied, "you will pay for this."

The fear still existed in some quarters that the deputies would draw more blood. Rev. Carl Houser, pastor of the Slovak Lutheran church at Freeland, boarded a streetcar that rattled noisily into Hazleton to see if he could identify any of the dead and wounded. He stopped. He saw several guns standing against the side of the car. "I'm afraid to go through," he said to one of the deputies, "I might get shot."

"You need not be afraid," the deputy assured him, "the guns are empty now."

The sun was about setting when the last car with its load of injured bounced and swayed with as much comfort as a cement mixer down Broad Street to the end of the line. From there to the hospital on top of the hill in the eastern end of town the wounded, with bloody faces, bandaged limbs, and bullet-riddled clothing, were hauled in express delivery wagons, busses from livery stables, and carriages. The streets were lined with townspeople. No sooner had one horse-drawn vehicle passed than another was on the way to the two-story hospital. Weeping women, their hair tucked wildly under vari-colored shawls, stopped the drivers here and there to ask, "Do you have my husband?"

HOSPITAL SCENE

Hazleton State Hospital, amid black and ugly breakers, was a heartrending place. It had only 51 beds, 37 of which were already filled. Dr. Harry M. Keller, the young hospital superintendent, sent some of the patients home to make room for the wounded strikers. The cries of the wounded as they were lifted from the stretchers were piteous, and the flow of blood, checked by clotting, burst forth anew as they were lowered on cots in the accident ward.

Six aproned doctors set to the task of salvaging as many of the wounded as they could. Andrew Meyer, a tall, slim Slovak boy five days within his seventeenth birthday, was wheeled into the operating room. Head bowed in arms, his father, who had helped to dig the foundation for the hospital nine years earlier, whispered a prayer outside the door. The doctors amputated the boy's left leg at the thigh.

When he was attended to another patient was quickly wheeled into his place and so on until the operating room was bespattered with blood and pieces of flesh. The skulls of John Bonko, George Gasperick, and John Slabonick were perforated and a disk of bone taken out to remove pressure on

the brain as a result of bullet wounds. The abdomens of four men, Platek, John Kulick, Dulass, and Andrew Slabonick, John's younger brother for whom Meyer expected to be a mule driver as soon as the strike was over, were opened so that bullets could be taken from them. All these cases except Meyer were placed on the critical list.

Long into the night the work was continued and the next morning the bare-armed physicians, wearied by loss of sleep, started in again, dressing the wounds of Matthias Czaja, Adam Lapinski, Andrew Urban, Andrew Honis, John Postej, Andrew Yesmond, Martin Shefronick, Bernard Ruman and others. Altogether thirty-eight strikers were admitted to the hospital. George Treible, the only deputy hurt by the indiscriminate firing of his own kind, sought medical aid in the company doctor's office at Lattimer.

The scenes enacted at the bedside of dying men by grief-stricken relatives beggared description. Approaching the cot of Clement Platek, a 33-year-old Polish miner, was his sunken-eyed wife and the mother of his three children. She threw herself across his body and went into hysterics. Not far away, groaning with pain and anguish, was Stanley Zagorski, another Pole with a wife and three children. Jacob Tomashontas, a swarthy Lithuanian boy who boarded with close relatives at Harwood, was a mass of coagulated blood and powder burns. The deputies had fired one bullet into his body over the heart, another in the right lung, and the third in his arm.

In his blood-stained cassock, Father Richard C. Aust, an alert, vigorous Benedictine priest of thirty-two who spent all afternoon kneeling beside dying men at Lattimer and hearing confessions at St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church, arrived at the hospital in time to anoint those who worshipped in his church. Seven men died in the hospital and their bodies were taken to a wooden stable behind the building. Those who died on the battlefield were removed either to Boyle's or Bonin's funeral parlors.

ON VERGE OF WAR

As soon as Governor Daniel H. Hastings heard about the Lattimer massacre, he directed the head of the Pennsylvania National Guard, Brigadier General John P. Gobin, to proceed to the scene with five regiments of the Third Brigade. The first detachment, the Ninth Regiment of Wilkes Barre, arrived early Saturday morning to find the town quivering on the

edge of a volcano. More blue coats arrived on every train until 3,000 soldiers patrolled the roads and guarded the mines in the land of hard-to-pronounce names. They had orders to disarm every man and quell impromptu demonstrations in and around Hazleton.

The enraged strikers were bent upon the complete destruction of Lattimer. Excitement ran high. The women and children who lived in the tiny mountain patch were so scared that they sought refuge in neighboring patches. Several men and boys went down into the mines to sleep.

Thousands of strikers grit their teeth for action. Their first objective was to find some guns. Windows were smashed and doors were broken as they stormed the Lehigh and Wilkes Barre coal office. They tore down closets. When they didn't find any guns, they started a house to house search. In a boarding house they finally found an old army musket, but it had as much chance of killing anyone as Fahy had of becoming president of the Leghigh Coal and Navigation Company. They battered down the door of Gomer Jones' house and ransacked it while Jones, who had discharged the mule drivers to begin the strike, was hiding in a nearby mining slope. The whole story of revenge in that strike will, perhaps, never be known.

PUBLIC INDIGNATION

People throughout the country were shocked to hear the Lattimer news. The towering, chestnut-haired man from Plains who surrendered his own judgment to that of his deputies in the middle of a strike was plastered with just about every epithet in the English language. If the voters of Luzerne County had a chance to vote for him again, he might have received less votes than any candidate in the nation's history.

Hazleton's mayor, Justis Altmiller, who was confined to his home with rheumatism, told a reporter of the *Philadelphia Times*: "Two weeks ago when the strikers . . . were starting to march through, I hurried to the scene and firmly, but as graciously as possible, ordered them to halt and commanded them not to enter the city limits . . . As a result they did not march into the city . . . The Sheriff of Luzerne County and his mob of deputies could have effected the same results without butchering in cold blood a single man."

To tell what actually happened and the order of occurrence, many large metropolitan dailies sent their star reporters

into the coal fields to interview Sheriff Martin and other participants. The interviews were so hopelessly in conflict on important points that two and three different accounts appeared in some American cities.

"I halted the marching column," Martin told a reporter of the *Philadelphia North American* when he got off the train in Wilkes Barre on Bloody Friday, "and read the proclamation. They refused to pay attention, and started to resume their march. Then I called to the leader to stop. He ignored my order. I then attempted to arrest him . . . I hated to give the command to shoot, and was awful sorry that I was compelled to do so, but I was there to do my duty."

It is interesting to study this statement in relation with other reports. Right after the interview Martin's personal attorney, George S. Ferris, took him to the hotel across the street from the railroad station and talked with him for several minutes. Then Martin called in reporters who had gathered in the hotel lobby and, sitting on a chair opposite his lawyer in a bedroom, told them that he did not order the deputies to fire. The two versions appeared the same day in newspapers from coast to coast. Readers had their choice, and they took the first one. The pressure of public indignation troubled the sheriff considerably the last ten years of his life.

From all over the nation messages poured into Hazleton offering assistance of men and money for the prosecution of Sheriff Martin and his deputies. The National Polish Alliance, representing 12,000 Poles in the United States, sent \$1,000 for the aid of the miners. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters offered \$5,000. Dr. Theodore Thodorovich, secretary of the Austrian consulate in Philadelphia, broke off a honeymoon to gather affidavits in Harwood with which to bring the law officers to trial. He also obtained the release of the two strikers who were held in jail without a hearing, and Steve Yusko, whose arm was broken, was the thirty-ninth striker admitted to the hospital.

WARRANTS FOR DEPUTIES

The strikers lost no time in taking legal action. Warrants were issued on September 11 for the arrest of Sheriff Martin and 102 deputies. That afternoon two constables made an effort to arrest A. E. Hess. But the leader of one of the companies of deputies had taken refuge within the military lines of Ninth Regiment in Hazel Park, and constables were refused permission to pass the guard.

As soon as the hook-nosed Gobin heard about the warrants, he issued an edict declaring that so long as the troops remain in the vicinity not a single deputy shall be placed under arrest. Paying no attention to the general from Lebanon, another constable lay in wait for Hess at the entrance of Hazel Park. Shortly after three o'clock Sunday morning, Hess, under a guard of soldiers, left the camp on his way home. The constable stepped out of the darkness with warrant in his hand, but the regimental officer of the day breached the gap between Hess and the constable. He said he would protect the deputy from arrest.

"I will take Hess dead or alive," the constable declared. "I have had my finger on a trigger before now and am not easily frightened."

The regimental officer and some soldiers quickly outmaneuvered the constable and took him to camp. The constable was kept in the guard tent ten hours until his release was secured. Owing to military authority, Sheriff Martin and the deputies were not arrested until ten days after the warrants were issued. In the meantime much took place in the lives of the strikers.

DEATH WITH HONOR

On Sunday, with a heavy mist creeping over the mountains, the miners and their families put on their best clothes for the most imposing funeral procession ever to be seen in Hazleton. The saloons were closed. The hour of burial for four martyrs was set for ten o'clock, but by daylight the city and surrounding patches were alive with people on their way to St. Joseph's Slovak Catholic Church.

The first funeral to start was that of Andrew Yurecek from Humboldt, two rows of cheap, frame company houses a mile beyond Harwood. He had lived there with his wife, and so far as is known they had no children. His remains were accompanied by many friends and sympathizers.

The cortege arrived in Harwood to find street services going on over the body of Mike Cheslock, a member and trustee of the Slovak Lutheran Church in Freeland, several miles away. Rather than take Cheslock's body such a distance, the Lutheran minister, Rev. Karl Houser, came from Freeland to administer the last rites of the Church outside the ramshackle shanty in which the 38-year-old martyr had fathered the last four of his five children. His wife, who had arrived with their first child from Hungary in 1890, eight years after his coming



This picture of sheriff's deputies who shot down striking miners at Latimer was familiar in old political campaigns. W. E. Evans, editor of Vigilant, an independent weekly, used it effectively in a story, "Ghosts are Rattling Their Bones," when Charles J. Haen, second from left in second row, ran in vain against Charles Kabitski for chief Burgess of West Hazleton. Other deputies moved away rather than face the ordeal of explaining where they were on September 10, 1897, and the memory of the shooting brought many of them to an early death.

to the mine patch, presented a pitiful sight as she and her brood wept during the open air services. Sorrowing comrades were to carry Cheslock's white-draped coffin to its final resting place in the Hazleton Cemetery on Vine Street.

The funeral of John Futa was in marked contrast with the others. Members of the Hazleton Slavonic band, attired in their uniforms with gold-laced caps and badges of crepe pinned on their breasts, turned out in his honor, for he had played one of the silver instruments in the band. The instrument, surrounded with flowers, rested on the lid of his coffin.

His young mother, with delicately carved features, held the crowd spellbound for a moment. One eye-witness, a reporter of the **Philadelphia Times** who was present when she jumped up on a chair in front of her home, wrote down what she told the audience: "My boy is dead. My boy, who was my only support. He earned sometimes 75 cents a day. He was a good boy. He took care of his poor-widowed mother. Now he is dead. The dog of a sheriff and the dogs of men killed him. They killed your people. Now the soldiers are here to kill us, too. We must not let them. We must fight. We must avenge the death of our people."

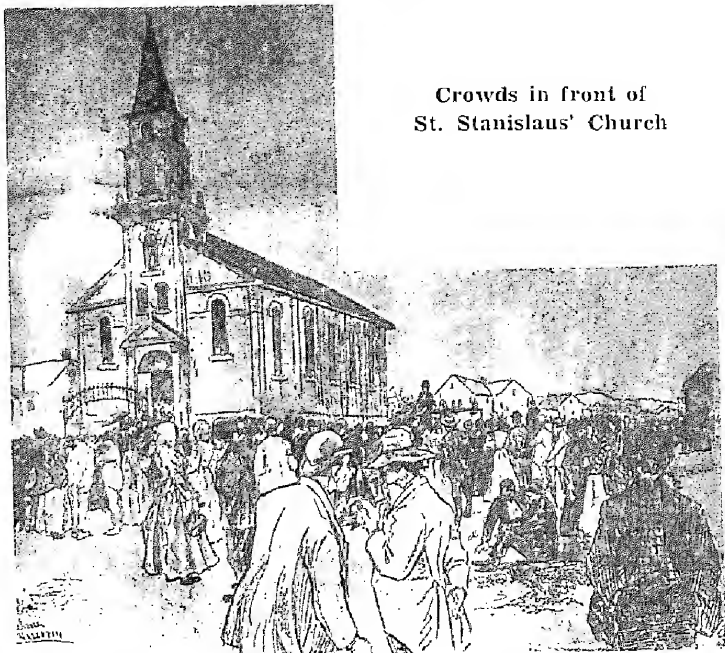
Across the primitive street, in a shanty whose ceiling beams were exposed, members of St. Joseph's beneficial society took out the body of Steve Urich, who had the same size of family as Cheslock. As the four coffins were lined up in the street, a brass band, playing the dead march with muffled drums, led the cortege through the mountain passes, over the gloomy lanes into Hazleton. After the band came St. Joseph's and St. Peter's societies, 500 strong, each man wearing a red, white and blue sash slung across the right shoulder. Then came the hearses and mourners.

Last of all came the main body of strikers. Every miner in Harwood and Humboldt was in the long procession. At Cranberry, the entire population swarmed on top of slate piles on each side of the road to watch the procession go by, and scores of men left the patch to join the line. By ten o'clock three thousand miners, marching in almost the same direction as the martyrs two days before, had converged upon the tiny Slovak church. After the funeral services, thousands more witnessed the burials in St. Joseph's Cemetery. Yurecek and Urich were buried in one grave, made doubly wide, and Futa occupied a single grave.

IN MEMORIAM

Sublime as were the funerals of the four Slovaks from Harwood and Humboldt, they could not equal the scope and size of burying twelve victims on Monday. The arrangements fell in the hands of the Knights of St. George. Since its origin in Allegheny County in 1881, the Knights of St. George, an organization of male Catholics to provide benefits for the widows and orphans of deceased members and for members in case of sickness or accident, had phenomenal success among the Polish mine workers of Pennsylvania just as St. Joseph's society had among Slovak workers. Hardly a man among the dead did not belong to one of those two beneficial societies to assist each other in case of a mishap in the mines. Workmen's compensation was then unknown.

Members of St. George's society did as much as they could to provide a decent burial for the Lattimer martyrs. They erected a platform before the altar in St. Stanislaus' church



Crowds in front of
St. Stanislaus' Church

24

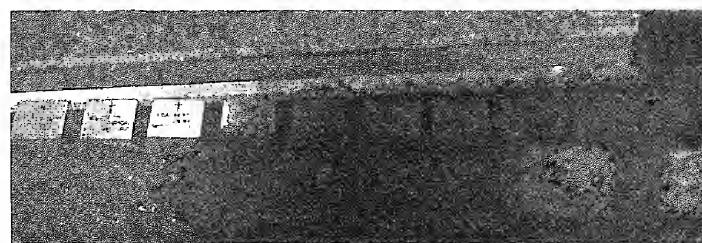
on which to rest the coffins during pontifical high mass. They blasted rock in the parish cemetery to make a large circular grave for their bodies. They hired a band to play dirges. Each member, in the regalia of the society, spilled out of the tiny hamlets that dotted the Lehigh region with badges "In memorium."

As thousands accompanied the bodies of Grekos and Mieczkowski from Harwood and Rekewicz from Cranberry over the dusty roads between slate-covered hills, others witnessed the carriage of nine coffins on the shoulders of sorrowing miners from the undertaker's shop to the Polish church, four blocks away. In them, each carried by ten men, were the bodies of Broztowski, Chrzesczeski, Czaja, Kulick, Monikaski, Skrep, Zagorski, Ziominiski, and Ziomba.

When their coffins were set down on the altar platform, the coffin-bearers discovered that there was no room for the three bodies coming from the mine patches. Preparations were made at the last moment to take the cortege from Harwood to St. Peter's and Paul's Lithuanian Church on West Diamond Street and extra men were dispatched to the cemetery to dig more graves. The office of the dead and the last benediction were chanted in Latin at both churches. Afterwards the twelve bodies were interred in St. Stanislaus' cemetery.

The following day the last rites for Jacob Tomashontas were held in St. Cunegunda's Roman Catholic Church at McAdoo, and his remains lie unmarked in St. Patrick's Cemetery there.

If you visit St. Stanislaus' cemetery today, you will not find all the names of those who were buried there on September 13, 1897. You will find the name of Clement



Little Stones for Ten Martyrs

25

Platek, who was buried there two days later, but not the names of Grekos, Kulick, and Monikaski. Platek's name appears with nine others on ten little stones near the front gate. The martyrs in other cemeteries have no monument. There should be a fitting memorial in honor of the eighteen martyrs so that we may pay tribute to their memory of the anniversary of the Lattimer massacre.

STRUGGLE FOR UNIONISM

The shedding of blood overshadowed the struggle of the Harwood miners for redress of their grievances. But almost immediately after the shooting, the 1,500 employees of Lattimer Colliery quit work in a body to back up the demands of the Harwood men.

On Saturday afternoon, when the entire region was in turmoil, they gathered in front of the Lattimer schoolhouse to listen to union speakers and to join the United Mine Workers of America. The 2,700 Pardee employees, who formed a big lump of the 5,000 mine workers Fahy had enrolled in the U. M. W. since he entered the field a week earlier, started to show the militancy characteristic of their offspring in succeeding decades of the union's history.

Calvin Pardee, ex-president of the Leghigh Coal and Navigation Company, prepared for a long, bitter struggle. He recoiled with horror from a list of the strikers' demands which ranged all the way from abolition of the company store to a twenty per cent increase in wages. "I don't think it will be changed," he said in regard to the strike situation, "until we are rid of the agitators who came here and induced the men to go out."

The strikers' committee, consisting of four Poles, four Italians and four Slovaks, was not in a strong position to bargain with the company. It lacked coordination with the strikers of other companies to enforce their demands. It was considerably weakened on September 13 when the strikers of the Leghigh and Wilkes Barre Coal Company reached an agreement with the company and decided to resume work on Monday.

On Tuesday the Lattimer men were to receive the answer of the company to their demands. The L. & W. B. miners stayed out a few days longer to support them. Hundreds of bearded and sallow-cheeked miners gathered near the company store. On rising ground behind the store appeared soldiers

of the Thirteenth Regiment with guns on their shoulders and eyes on the mine property. It seemed as if a modern Babylon, filled with an orchestration of strange tongues that had fused under the banner of unionism, had taken over a grubby, down-at-the-heels wagon-parking area in front of "pluck me" store.

All of a sudden the babble of strange tongues quieted down when Augustus W. Drake, the dark-complexioned superintendent of the Lattimer mines, came out of the store. He wasted no time in making a speech. The answer of the company was "No" to all their demands. "You have nothing to gain by being idle," he added. "What do you say, will you come back?"

There was a little pause and then the sharp accents of many nationalities filled the air with a deafening "No." Even the women in the tiny houses that crowded shoulder to shoulder along the narrow street heard it.

Mary Septek, who kept a boarding house not far from the company store, gathered about 150 brawny Polish women and stopped a number of men from going to work the next morning. The women, who annoyed General Gobin by their entry into the strike, started for Lattimer washery under the leadership of the Polish Amazon. The cavalymen came out to meet them and pushed them off the road with their gun muzzles. The women climbed up a culm bank and the boarding lady shouted back to the soldiers to share their ammunition. "Then," she shrieked, "we'll show you a devil of a time."

Gradually scabs found their way back to colliery after colliery, and within a week some mines were in full operation. The rest were forced to go back on the same terms as before the strike.

PRELIMINARY HEARING

On September 21, eleven days after the first warrants were issued, Sheriff Martin and 78 deputies were brought into court at Wilkes Barre, the seat of Luzerne County, charged with the murder and felonious wounding of 52 unarmed strikers. Under escort of the Ninth Regiment, they occupied nearly half of the courtroom. Judges John J. Lynch and Lyman H. Bennett sat in as Justices of the Peace to hear the evidence.

No sooner had the preliminary hearing got under way than John M. Garman, a strong-jawed Irishman with frank, deep-set eyes and red hair, jumped up. The prosecuting committee had engaged the chairman of the Democratic State Committee as one of the lawyers to press the charges against the county peace officer. He attacked Gobin and the soldiers, the sheriff and the judges, and finally moved that the case be sent back to Hazleton for a hearing before a Justice of the Peace.



John Garman

The judges refused. Garman then said he was withdrawing from the case. So did John McGahren, another lawyer the strikers hired to prosecute the case. He locked his arm with Garman's and both disappeared through the courtroom doors. The case continued with the prosecution in the hands of Daniel A. Fell, who was soon to be succeeded by a new District Attorney.

The sheriff and his band pleaded not guilty, were released on \$6,000 bail each, and bound over for a hearing before the grand jury. Subsequently the grand jury remanded them for trial.

The strikers who were called as witnesses got their first look at the American judiciary system. Sitting stiffly erect in their seats, they found it hard to understand the crossfire between opposing sides. It was quite obvious to them, though they needed the services of interpreters, that the men in black robes were not to be trifled with, and were furthermore puzzled by the walkout of their two lawyers.

The prosecuting committee the strikers formed had a big job to raise funds for the purpose of transporting witnesses to Wilkes Barre, feeding their families while they were at the trial, and engaging a battery of lawyers. All Slav groups in Hazleton were co-ordinated for the job. Anyone who went down to the headquarters of the prosecuting committee, located in John Nemeth's general merchandise store on Wyom-

ing Street, found things humming. John Nemeth, treasurer of the committee, knew what it was be without money. When he came from Hungary to pick slate in a breaker in 1881, he had only 34 cents in his pocket. With Father Aust and Matt Long, president and secretary of the committee respectively, he worked hard to raise as much money as possible to defray the expenses which would pile up as soon as the Lattimer trial came.

THE COMMONWEALTH vs. SHERIFF MARTIN

Not since the trials of the Molly Maguires had a case excited so much interest in the coal regions as that of Sheriff James Martin and his deputies. The case was called for trial on February 1, 1898, before Judge Stanley Woodward, president judge of Luzerne County. Observers of all shades of opinion jammed the dignified town of Wilkes Barre. Foreign governments had representatives at the trial for the purpose of filing claims against the United States government if the sheriff and his deputies were convicted. Washington had U. S. District Attorney Henry M. Hoyt there, too.



Mike Cheslock

lock, upon whose killing the case was to be tried, was known to more potential witnesses than any other victim.

Sheriff Martin engaged John T. Lenahan, Luzerne County's foremost criminal lawyer, to defend him together with Ferris, his personal attorney. Other defense counsel included former State Senator Clarence W. Kline, George H. Troutman, and Henry W. Palmer, former Attorney General of Pennsylvania under Governor Henry Holt.

As soon as the trial opened, District Attorney T. R. Martin, who wasn't in office even a month, asked the cherubic-faced judge for the assistance of four lawyers who were retained by the prosecuting committee. They were Garman, McGahren, James Scarlett, a leading criminal lawyer from Danville, and P. F. Loughran, former secretary of the miners' prosecuting committee. To all of which Lenahan replied: "I would be only too glad if the district attorney had employed a thousand men to assist him."

Such an array of legal talent had never before been seen in the trial of a case in Luzerne County. Sheriff Martin, dressed in a dark suit and a bright red necktie, sat at his counsel's table. He did not have the careworn look he did when arraigned in court shortly after the shooting. His demeanor was quiet and unassuming. The deputies who occupied seats behind him looked like a well-dressed body of businessmen who came to attend a convention of some kind. The District Attorney nolleed indictments against 14 deputies because they were not present at the scene of the shooting and one against a deputy whose wife was dying. That left the sheriff and 67 deputies on trial.

TRIAL BY JURY

The fact that the eighteen strikers killed at Lattimer were Slavs made a big difference in the selection of a jury. If it were to be an impartial jury, the jurors had to be men who never held a grudge against greenhorns from a Slavic country. Such a citizen was rare in the 1890's. The mine owners found it paid them to excite racial prejudices and the problem of finding twelve jurors who treated Polish and Slovak immigrants the same as third generation Welshmen and Englishmen was difficult.

Few veniremen declined to serve. They were questioned only mildly and then picked if they said their fixed opinions might be changed by evidence. One juror who admitted some prejudice against foreigners was accepted by both sides because he was an old soldier.

Eli Weaver, a Pennsylvania Dutch laborer who had expressed an opinion to fellow workmen in Plymouth township, was the first one to go into the jury box. Others were G. R. Shaw, carpenter, Ross township; Aaron Freeman, a farmer turned rope maker, Wilkes Barre; Adam Larvon, tinsmith, Sugar Loaf; C. C. Ransom, contractor, Plymouth; B. M. Rood, farmer, Ross township; Jonas B. Oxrider, carpenter, Sugar Loaf township; A. W. Washburn, carriagemaker, Freeland; Alfred Stevens, clerk, Wilkes Barre; A. H. Shields, carpenter, Wilkes Barre; H. A. Wolfe, farmer, Ross township; Herman Gregory, farmer, Huntington township.

In his opening address to the jury McGahren called the case without a parallel in the history of the country. "You are not to consider the race or creed of the persons killed or their friends," he said. "You are to consider the duties and powers of a sheriff."

Most of the prosecution witnesses were foreigners who participated in the fatal march to Lattimer. Such witnesses as Eagler and Sivar spoke fairly good English, but the majority of others had to give their testimony through interpreters. The



Lattimer Jury and Judge Stanley Woodward

procedure was boring. Within a week's time the jurors began to grow weary. The novelty of the case had worn off. The bustle and confusion of visitors looking for seats ceased.

The courtroom, which seated no more than 200 persons, smelled as bad as a smoking parlor, for the smoke of loafers in the corridors and offices of the Luzerne County Courthouse, a large brownstone building with a clock tower, pervaded every nook and cranny of the poorly ventilated, poorly lighted and overheated building. Sometimes Judge Woodward, a 66-year-old blueblood with a walrus mustache who had studied law since 1856, could hardly hear himself talk. The bells of the electric cars which ran around the building in the Public Square clanged incessantly from morning to night.

"YOU ARE A PUPPY!"

On Saturday, February sixth, Garman exploded a bombshell in the courtroom. He announced Sheriff Martin and his deputies were free but they did not know it. Incredulity swept through the audience. Garman went on to explain that when arraigned at the preliminary hearing in September, the entire party was held in bail aggregating nearly \$500,000 for appearance at the November term of court. When November arrived, the case was continued until January but bail was not renewed. District Attorney Martin immediately asked for bail or commit the defendants to jail.

Judge Woodward replied that he would not require the sheriff and the deputies, who were indicted for murder in the first degree as well as on several lesser charges, to enter bail until Monday morning.

"Does your Honor propose," Garman asked, "to permit these men to be at large in the meanwhile?"

"I do," snapped the Judge.

Whereupon Lenahan got up to say that the prosecution need not be afraid that the officers would run away. Garman's insistence for bail stabbed the bullish, 45-year-old chief defense counsel in the heart. His face red as a rose, Lenahan walked to the Commonwealth table and stood on the opposite side from Garman.

"You are a puppy!" he shouted. "You have been a puppy all your life."

Garman hurled back the insult and the crossfire continued for several minutes. "When the thing back of me shuts up,"

Garman turned from addressing Lenahan to stand facing the Judge, "I will proceed."

"That is only a part of the buffoonery of the Commonwealth," Lenahan interrupted.

"The buffoon has just ceased speaking."

Ignoring the repartee, Judge Woodward stuck to his decision to let Sheriff Martin and the deputies go until Monday. At that time the bail required for them was entered by the Citizens' Trust, Safe Deposit and Surety Company of Philadelphia, and it is conceivable that Calvin Pardee, who lived in the fashionable suburbs of the city, directed the Philadelphia bank to put up the bail.

AN ARMY OF WITNESSES

About 140 witnesses for the Commonwealth were taken to a room on the third floor of the courthouse to await the call for their testimony. As witness chased witness through the sweatbox like figures through a kinetoscope the prosecution continued to pile up evidence that Cheslock and others were marching peaceably and unarmed on the public highway and that they were intercepted by the persons in authority at Lattimer and mercilessly shot to death.

As the trial progressed, the people's opinion of Judge Woodward deteriorated progressively. His handling of the bail for the defendants started it off. During the entire trial he tried to exclude testimony presented by the Commonwealth to show malice and hatred on the part of the deputies. He sought to wear the jury out with the dried carcass of a monotonous tale. Many deputies brought newspapers and magazines along to lighten the tedium of listening to corroborative evidence.

The lawyers for Sheriff Martin endeavored to work in some of their defense by using prosecution witnesses. Judge Woodward gave them as much leeway as they could take from the sleeping opposition. One lawyer kept asking the same questions over and over again. When he asked one witness what arms he carried, the miner replied: "Nothing, save God."

It took a lot of money to keep 150 witnesses in Wilkes Barre. Within two weeks the prosecuting committee ran out of funds and appealed for more. The families of witnesses begged on the streets because they were starving. Fifty State witnesses were finally allowed to go home and provide for their families.

Soon afterwards some of them returned to the witness stand in Wilkes Barre to tell what had happened to them. "When I returned home," one witness related, "I went to John Beach, outside foreman at the A. Pardee & Co.'s Harwood mine, where I have been employed for two years, and told him that I was ready to go back to work."

"'You were on the stand against us,' said Beach, 'and told a lot of lies. You are no good. You get out of here and go, you can never work at this colliery.'"

Another witness who was discharged said that the mine foreman told him: "There will be a lot of jobs and a great many vacant company houses around here when this trial is over."

The day those discharged miners crawled into the witness box, there was a stir of excitement in the courtroom. A new visitor was present. Young, magnetic, and well-dressed, the newcomer would have been noticed anywhere. It was Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor—an immigrant, one of the strikers' own kind. He told reporters afterwards that the A. F. of L. may endeavor to have the mine officials indicted for the intimidation of witnesses in the trial.

MINERS ON THE CROSS

No workers probably were crucified as much as the witnesses who carried their wounds into the courtroom. The first of these was Andrew Meyer, second youngest witness at the trial, who hobbled to the stand on crutches. No sooner had he answered the questions of the prosecution than Lenahan tore into him as though to prolong the misery. But the 17-year-old boy held his own.

Before the strikers left Harwood on September 10, Meyer and two other youths went to Butler Valley and were on the way home with cucumbers in their pockets when they met the marchers near Harleigh. They went along with the marchers voluntarily, but Lenahan tried to twist the words around to show that the strikers forced Meyer and his companions to go with them to Lattimer. To top it off the underpaid breaker boy told the bullish defense attorney that it did not require compulsion to fight injustice. The story was soon all over the courthouse—how the boy who sacrificed his leg for the cause of unionism had scored a point for the prosecution.

"You were a good witness," Nemeth said. "We're going to win."

Meyer spent all his life fighting. When he was eleven years old, and in this country only a few months, his father, who had come from Austria-Hungary some years before to escape persecution, got him a job as a slate picker in Harwood breaker. His first fight was born in race hatred. English-speaking boys threw slate and rock on his knuckles until he wanted to quit. In school he faced more racial prejudice than about the mines.



Andrew Meyer today

One day John Eagler, who was straw boss of the slate gang, caught the kids who day in and day out cut Meyer's knuckles and whacked them hard across the seat of their pants. Like other Slav breaker boys, Meyer followed Eagler's example. From twelve to fifteen he averaged two fights a week. He did well, and got a healthy respect from his enemies. He grew up in this seething melting-pot until the first spontaneous strike of the U. M. W. A. in the Hazleton region. After losing his leg, he could not sleep but on one side. On the witness stand he had the same hospital look as the other cripples—faces pallid, drawn, and thin.

After him came Mike Dulass. His first name was Casper, but everybody called him Mike. Once a broad-shouldered, stalwart, light-haired Lithuanian, he was now a walking ghost. One of the bullets the deputies fired at him plunged into his back, pierced his lungs, and came out through his breast. Mike, who was in the hospital three months, suffered from consumption the rest of his life. His testimony, broken by violent fits of coughing, added something new to the case. He said he heard someone cry, "Boys, fire."

Judge Woodward wanted no evidence of malice on the part of the deputies to reach the jury, but he could not stop the procession of witnesses who demonstrated the dreadful effects of Winchester bullets. As soon as he opened court on February 17, four husky Slavs walked into the courtroom and lowered a hopeless paralytic into the witness box. It was George Gasperick.

"I can't see well now," he whispered, "and every time I move my head I feel something rattle in there. I am unable to raise my arms or legs."

Four men lifted him from the chair and carried him to the jury box. One of the jurors stuck his finger into the hole where the bullet entered Gasperick's brain while he, without making a face because he was paralyzed, lay lamblike in the arms of his bearers. John Slabonick and Bonko, who also had bullets in their heads, endangered their lives by leaving the hospital to testify against the deputies.

Another witness, Bernard Ruman, whose spinal column was grazed by three bullets, enacted a scene I would never care to see. He lay pinching his finger nails into the woodwork of a stretcher and biting his lips in agony as he lay flat on his back directly in front of the judge. He groaned as each morsel of testimony came from his parched lips.

FOR THE DEFENSE

No doubt existed in anybody's mind that the bullets which killed and maimed strikers came from the guns in the hands of Martin's deputies. Although they shaved their facial adornments off, approximately 28 deputies were identified who had used their guns. The defense maintained, however, that the Commonwealth had no case unless it established whose bullets killed Cheslock.

Ferris, who opened the case for the defense four weeks after the trial began, said if Cheslock fell under the deputies' fire on that dreadful day it was by reason of his presence with, and as part of, a dangerous mob. Scores of defense witnesses, mostly housewives, were put on the stand to show that the union made threats, flourished revolvers and clubs and drove people into their cellars and out into the woods in fear.

Sheriff Martin himself was called as a witness. He was rather nervous, coughed frequently, and could not keep his hands still. He aimed to prove that he and his posse were needed at Hazleton to prevent disorder. Scarlett, who cross-examined the poker-faced sheriff, established the fact that Martin gave an order in advance and surrendered his own judgment to that of his posse. The sheriff, when questioned on his right to intercept the strikers, gave the following testimony:

Question (by Scarlett). At the time you reached Hazleton no breaker had been destroyed?

Answer (by Martin). No.

Q. The only thing that occurred was that men were prevented from working?

A. That is all.

Q. Who selected the spot to intercept the strikers?

A. I did.

Q. Why did you select that place?

A. Because I didn't want them to get near the breaker.

Several deputies followed the county officer on the stand. Garman sought to bring out the relationship of the deputies to the mine owners in order to prove they were serving their own interests. He found that Sam Price, who took charge of all the deputies when the sheriff was away, had a contract to build a breaker at Harwood and that the strike held up the work.

But the evidence was held inadmissible. "As it appears to me," said Judge Woodward, "the counsel is dealing with prejudices and the court with principle. That is the difference." Garman's jaw set. He argued stubbornly that such evidence should be admitted on grounds that it revealed the motive the deputies had for firing on peaceful marchers on a public highway. Judge Woodward ruled adversely.

FRIENDS AND FOES

In the five weeks of the trial, the longest in Pennsylvania up to that time, there was no attempt to bury the hatchet against greenhorns from the other side. "I would like to get a chance to shoot down some of the damned foreigners," one of Martin's deputies boasted before a drop of blood was shed at Lattimer. "I will help fill them full of holes," another remarked. "The country would be better off without them."

Scarlett's technique in his closing argument for the Commonwealth was to make the twelve jurors in the box ignore their prejudices in the case. His first step was to show the sheriff "can only exercise the right given him by law to preserve the peace and cannot do as he pleases." The prosecution attorney then moved to bury racial hatred, to bare his fight for American freedom by the blood of every race and to ask for the conviction of the defendants for butchering a lot of unarmed men at Lattimer.

It was Scarlett's misfortune that the opposing attorneys made the major issue something which hurts an American in the heart. From the moment Palmer rose to present the closing argument for the defense the characteristics of Slavic people were maligned as they never were in the United States. He

was determined to dig his blueblooded claws into Slavs as deep as his father had attacked the immigrants from Ireland and other lands when he was sheriff of Luzerne County in the early 1840's. He denounced "the barbarian horde, who will, if they can, point with pride to Lattimer as the place where was shed the blood of their martyrs."

To him Mehalto, who carried one of the American flags on the fatal march, was a "barbarian"; Aust, who kept the prosecuting committee alive with his boundless energy, "a priest of God who will lend himself to further the machinations of this dangerous element"; Scarlett "an eloquent gentleman who would, too, aid to murderous band of assassins"; Fahy "is like all the other foul birds of prey called labor agitators," and the president of the American Federation of Labor the "foul-mouthed Gompers." Not until this reference to Gompers did District Attorney Martin, whom Palmer a second before called "the curled and scented Adonis of the bar," object to Palmer's boldfaced technique of injecting prejudice into the jury box. It was too late.

Palmer's address to the jury, in effect a bigoted oration against the first wave of Slav immigrants into the hard coal fields, was one of the foulest utterances that ever disgraced a murder case. In it the truth suffered. It undid the weeks the jury spent in hearing evidence. The jurors were taken right back where they were before they entered the jury box. The editors who published the text of his address, if they were living today, would be ashamed to face their readers. The kind of people Palmer did not want in his midst now keep in business the same newspapers who praised Palmer's speech.

THE VERDICT

With fierce epithet and withering scorn, the 58-year-old Wilkes Barre lawyer made it impossible to judge fairly the legal issues involved in the case. The jurymen, with the heat and fire of Palmer's words still burning in their ears, took the case in their hands. They were anxious to do their duty and get home to their own affairs. They did not consider the testimony of nearly 250 witnesses, hundreds of exhibits, as well as the gory procession of witnesses from the hospital. They took one ballot as soon as they were behind locked doors and the verdict was known. But they waited until the following morning to reveal it.

On March 2, 1898, the jury brought in a verdict of "not guilty"; with the prosecution blocked at every turn and Palmer's anti-Slav tirade they could do no less. "I expected all along to be acquitted," said Sheriff Martin.

Despite Judge Woodward's unfair handling of the case, the perpetrators of the shooting, according to the best legal authority, were not properly prosecuted. If Martin and his deputies were indicted on manslaughter charges, the chances are that they might have been convicted. That's what the legal experts thought. But all the legal reasoning over that case have little influence when face to face with racial hatred.

Racial hatred triumphed in that trial. Not justice. The miners knew it as well as anyone did. The 18 miners who fell under the firing of hate-mongers left a job for them to finish. They had died so that others would have unionism. The next wave of Slavs went out with the rest of the mine workers under the banner of John Mitchell and the U. M. W. A. and achieved it. That unionism still flourishes as strongly as the gospel the miners' patron saint spread from one end of the hard coal country to the other: "The coal you dig is not Slavish coal, or Polish coal, or Irish coal. It is coal."

Let us pause to pay tribute to the men who were shot in the back by deputy sheriffs in that monumental struggle to win a decent way of life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND SOURCES

The newspapers of 1890's were the best sources of information about the Lattimer Massacre. Among them I must mention first the excellent accounts of T. V. R. in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. His dispatches appeared until midway through the trial in 1898 when, bored with the monotony of the trial, he left to use his journalistic talents elsewhere. The *Inquirer* then used the dispatches of an Associated Press reporter from Wilkes Barre, but they lacked insight and showed no initiative on the reporter's part to give a thorough picture of the trial. I went through the files of the following newspapers to fill gaps: *Hazleton Plain Speaker*, *Hazleton Sentinel*, *Philadelphia North American*, *Philadelphia Times*, *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, *Wilkes Barre Times*, *Wilkes Barre Leader*, and *Wilkes Barre Record*.

For courteous help given in connection with the use of these newspapers and various local histories, I wish to thank the staffs of the *Hazleton Standard-Sentinel*, *Wilkes Barre*

Times-Leader, and the public libraries in Philadelphia, Hazleton and Wilkes Barre.

Let me specifically list some sources of information and illustrations which I did not identify by footnotes. My description of early labor conditions follows that of Hugh O'Donnell's article, *The Great Strike of the Coal Miners and the Conditions That Led Up to It*, in the September 19, 1897, issue of the **Philadelphia Times**, and my own unpublished biography of John Siney, president of the Workmen's Benevolent Association and later the Miners' National Association, in the 1870's. The legal proceedings of the trial derive in part from Oyer & Terminer Docket No. 4, pages 355-373, in the Luzerne County Courthouse. Some details about Ario Pardee, General John Gobin, Henry W. Palmer, and Judge Stanley Woodward are from the *Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography*. The career of Calvin Pardee is from his obituaries in the **Philadelphia Evening Bulletin** and the **Public Ledger**, March 19, 1923. For Reverend Richard Aust's career, see his obituary in the **Hazleton Daily Standard**, September 24, 1913. In James Martin's obituary in the Wilkes Barre **Times-Leader**, December 31, 1907, there was less than two old friends, John Conlon and Harry T. Butts, told me about him. The careers of lesser figures in the Lattimer affair were found in *A History of Wilkes Barre*, by O. J. Harvey and Ernest G. Smith.

The head study of Sheriff Martin on page 9 is from the **Philadelphia North American**, February 9, 1898. The photograph of sheriff's deputies on page 21 was copied from an original in the possession of one of Mrs. Sonderschafer's neighbors. A Hazleton artist drew the picture of crowds in front of St. Stanislaus' Polish Church on page 24 for the **Philadelphia Inquirer**, September 14, 1897. The sketch of John Garman on page 28 is from the same newspaper, February 7, 1898. The photograph of Mike Cheslock on page 29 is from a copy the Slovak fraternal society to which he had belonged sold for fifty cents in order to raise money for his widow and five children. The drawing of the judge and the jury on page 31 is from the **Philadelphia North American**, February 5, 1898. The other photographs were taken by the author.

Two of those who went along on that fatal march to Lattimer—John Miklos and Andrew Meyer—were interviewed by the author, as were Mrs. Mary Sonderschafer, daughter of Mike Cheslock; and others. I wish to thank the others who, in one way or another, helped me.

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